



HOW TO...

Get more from clip art

Clip art can sometimes lack that certain something but, as Adam Banks explains, you can customise it within Word to create more striking pictures for every occasion

Microsoft Word comes with a useful clip art collection and, provided you have a live internet connection, instant access to a range of extra content online. While the quality of the graphics is variable, you can usually find something decent. You can also edit clip art within Word. You shouldn't have to revamp the supplied artwork too much, but if you know how to remove unwanted elements and tweak colours, you can turn something not quite right into exactly what you need.

You can look up Word's arcane system of picture positioning in the onscreen help and here we show you the basic steps necessary to customise clip art. We've used Word 2003 but the steps are the same in Word 2002, and we'll note any differences in the text for Word 2000.

1 To find clip art, go to the Insert menu and select Picture, Clip Art. The Clip Art Task Pane opens on the right. In Word 2000, it opens a dialog box. Click the menu under Search in, and tick Everywhere. Word searches Microsoft's online collections as well as those installed on your PC. You want line drawings rather than photos or multimedia content. Click the menu under 'Results should be'. Untick everything except Clip Art; the menu now shows Selected media file types. Football springs to mind, so type 'soccer ball' under Search for and click Go. In Word 2000, click on Clips Online, enter 'soccer ball' in the Search box and select Clip Art in the drop-down menu to the left.

Scroll through the results to find the athletic chap seen here and click the picture to copy it

into your document. It looks good, except for a few problems. Whoever coloured in the ball got a bit mixed up. The cut-off background won't suit all purposes, and you may have a preference for blue shirts. Start by zooming in, using the Zoom pop-up menu in the top toolbar (ours is set to 150%) so you can see what you're doing. Right-click the picture and choose Edit Picture from the contextual menu.

2 A dialog box asks if you want to convert the picture to a drawing object. Click Yes. The clip art turns into a nightmare forest of white and green blobs; click anywhere blank to deselect everything. In Word 2000, the picture is opened in a separate Word window. You can now click any individual shape within the picture to edit it. Start with the incorrect black segment just below the centre of the ball. Select one of the light-coloured segments next to it, which it ought to match. You'll need the Drawing toolbar; if it isn't open, go to the View menu and click on Toolbars, then Drawing. In this toolbar, click the Fill Color button (paint bucket) and choose More Fill Colors. A dialog appears showing the specs of this shape's colour. Make a note of the red, green and blue numbers, then click Cancel.

3 Click on the offending black segment, go to More Fill Colors, enter the noted specs and click OK to apply the lighter colour. Use the same method to get the colour makeup of a black segment (it's not pure black) and copy it to the centre segment. You can also darken a segment at the bottom if you're feeling pedantic.

4 Move on to the shirt. Two shades of red are used to give an impression of depth. Change these to two shades of blue, which you can pick straight from the default colours in the Fill Colors pop-up. There are several shapes making up the shirt. You'll need to re-colour them one at a time. If you click and find the wrong shape is selected, just click again to get the next one. You can reverse what you've done by selecting Undo from the Edit menu.

5 Finally, we'll address the grey background. By dragging the side or corner handles that appear when you click it, you could extend it to cover the full area occupied by the footballer. Alternatively, having selected it, just press Delete to get rid of it. Do the same for the green area, and you'll get a cut-out picture ready to incorporate into a layout.

6 Perhaps you would like the cut-out superimposed on some chunky text for a dramatic heading. To do this, you need to remove the text wrap that applies to all drawing objects by default. Right-click the thick border that surrounds the whole picture and choose Format Drawing Canvas from the contextual menu. In the Format Drawing Canvas dialog, go to the Layout tab and choose In front of text. Click on the page, type and format some text, and position the picture over it by dragging its border. In Word 2000, close the Picture window. Right-click on one of the handles around the edges of the picture and select Format Picture. Go to Layout and choose In front of text. **CB**

